

Sermon: Pathways
Text: 2 Peter 1:3-15

Discussion Questions:

Most of us are likely familiar with the ubiquitous phrase from The Wizard of Oz:
“Follow the yellow brick road!”

You might even be singing the song in your head this very moment! ☺

This song—and this metaphor—reminds us of the importance of pathways in getting us from one place to another. Most of the time, in fact, if the pathway isn’t there—we would never even attempt to go where the pathway takes us.

- Talk about a memory you have of walking or hiking a particular trail or path.
 - Where was the trail?
 - Why did you decide to hike this trail?
 - What were you hoping to find at the end of the trail?
 - Was the hike “worth it”?
 - Would you have ever seen or experienced what you did if it weren’t for the trail?

This notion of pathways is very applicable to our journey as a disciple of Jesus. God never wants to leave us just as we are. He is always wanting to “take us” to new “heights” in our walk with Him—with the culmination of this journey being our eternal home in heaven with God.

The path is never an easy one. Take some time to discuss with your group some of the challenges you are facing as you walk the pathway of your life today...

- How would you describe the “terrain” of your life path today?
 - Is it a steep incline?
 - Are you on level ground?
 - Are you blessed to be walking a place on the path where there’s a nice gradual slope downward...and you’re able to catch your breath a bit?
 - Is the grade so steeply downhill that you feel completely out of control?
 - Is the pathway strewn with rocks and tree roots, making the footing very rough and uneven? What is causing this uneven footing?

Some of the most memorable trails that I’ve hiked in my lifetime have a noteworthy “payoff” waiting at the end of the hike—or somewhere along the way. Perhaps there’s a waterfall, or a scenic mountain lake. Other hikes feature amazing views, or lush green foliage along the way. The same is very much true for us as we walk the trail that God has marked out for us. God is always wanting to take us to new levels of commitment, or deeper experiences that He can use as we help others along their journey.

- What are some things you have learned from walking the more difficult sections of your particular trail in life?
- How has God used the difficulties that you’ve experienced in life to minister to others going through similar situations?
- What do you think it means to “steward your story”?

Examination:

- Read **2 Peter 1:3-11**:
 - Before we head out on a hike of significant length or strain, it is very important to pack the proper supplies—most especially water. The last thing you want is to find yourself in a situation for which you are unprepared and under-resourced. According to verse 3, what has God done to equip us?
 - What role does knowledge play?
 - What is the difference between God supplying us with everything we THINK we need—and everything we actually need?
 - What do you think it means for God to call us “by His own glory and goodness”?
 - What “great and precious promises” has God given us? (v. 4)
 - Discuss what you think it means to “participate in the divine nature.”
 - How does the power of God available to us (v. 3) correspond to our ability to escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (v. 4)?
 - Verse 5 begins by mentioning “this very reason.” What is that reason?
 - Verses 5-7 describe, in essence, a pathway. We see a progression of one thing—leading to another thing—leading to another thing—and so on.
 - Is this a path that is hiked easily? What, according to verse 5, is our responsibility?
 - What is step one along the path of a disciple? Why is faith so important?
 - How does a follower of Jesus add goodness to their life? What does this goodness entail? What does it look like in action?
 - Earlier, in verse 3, Peter mentioned the importance of knowledge. He mentions it again here in 5 as something we should add to our faith and goodness. What do you think this knowledge is? Knowledge of what?
 - What happens to person (maybe not immediately but eventually) when they lack self-control? What pitfalls await a person who can’t say “no.”
 - Perseverance means not giving up. How often have you been tempted to give up? How does this correspond to the more challenging places along the trail? What does God do to help us persevere?
 - “Godliness” isn’t a term we hear very often. What do you think it means?
 - By the time we get to “mutual affection”—we are “a fur piece” down the path of discipleship. Why do you think it appears further into the journey—and not right at the very beginning?
 - We read in 1 Corinthians 13 that the “greatest of these is love.” Why is love the greatest? Do you consider it the most challenging?
 - According to verse 9, what happens to the believer who fails to walk this path of discipleship?
 - Both verse 5, as well as verse 10 begin with the admonition to “make every effort.” Why does Peter say this twice? What does this say about the trail?
 - What happens when a disciple of Christ chooses to walk this path? (vv. 10-11) What’s the payoff at the end of the trail?

Application:

Make a list of these eight qualities of a disciple (ie: write them out on a 3x5 card). Put them in a place where you will see them often (ie: your bathroom mirror, or car dashboard). Ask the Lord to give you the power to live out these steps daily in your walk with Christ. Take it a step at a time!